



The Grand Tour

Spend a week – or two! – exploring the richness of the “Bay State” from coast to inland reaches and back again.

Since **Boston** is usually the international point of entry, a tour of the whole state can conveniently start here! Spend a day or two taking in the **historic sites**, absorb some culture at a performance or a museum, and make sure to **consume and imbibe** the best of Boston's cuisine! Boston looms large in the American Revolution story. Follow the footsteps of history along the 2.5-mile **Freedom Trail** that winds through downtown from **Boston Common** over the Charles River to the **USS Constitution** – docked in the Charlestown Navy Yard as part of the **Boston National Historic Park**. nps.gov/bost A visit to the **Old State House** can convey the ideals that drove the beginnings of the American Revolution, while the **Paul Revere House** and the **Old North Church** preserve the dramatic tale of the first engagement of the war. thefreedomtrail.org

Plan some time to take in a show by one of the capital's renowned performing arts groups – whether the Christmas seasonal favourite *Nutcracker* performance by the **Boston Ballet** (bostonballet.org) or a classical concert from the **Boston Symphony Orchestra** at the ornate **Symphony Hall** (bso.org). A play from one of the various theatre groups located throughout the city could light up your whole trip – Boston's cultural offerings never disappoint.



The USS Constitution

The city's world-class museums should also not be missed. The **Museum of Fine Arts (MFA)** boasts an encyclopaedic collection of masterpieces spanning the globe and all historical periods. mfa.org Just a short walk from the MFA brings you to the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**, an institution designed as a 15th-century Venetian palace. The unique architecture of the building and its beautiful courtyard are the perfect setting for viewing Gardner's eclectic collection, which she amassed throughout her life, including pieces of immense artistic significance. gardnermuseum.org For more than a half century, the **Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)** has presented contemporary art in all media—visual arts, film, and video, performance and literature. For a change of pace, visit this waterfront museum in the Seaport District and experience its educational programs that encourage an appreciation for contemporary culture. icaboston.org

If you want to be led to the best tastes of Boston, consider joining one of the many food tours that wind through the markets of the **North End** (Boston's Little Italy), **Chinatown** (bostonfoodtours.com) or the foodie favourites of **Beacon Hill** and the **Back Bay**. bostonfoodietours.com **Food by Foot** also offers three-hour walking tours through nearby **Brookline**, where you can taste Gefilte Fish, Latkes, and more on the Jewish Cuisine Tour, or learn the right way to drink tea and vodka on the Russian Cuisine Tour. foodbyfoot.com

Continue across the Charles River into **Cambridge**, where you can visit the campuses of **Harvard University** and the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**, two of the USA's most prestigious universities. Follow up a campus tour with dinner at one of Cambridge's chic centres – **Kendall, Inman, Central, Harvard** or **Porter Squares** – where you'll find a vast array of ethnic restaurants interspersed with street performers and quaint bookshops. cambridge-usa.org



Race Point Beach,
Provincetown

From there, head south to the town of **Plymouth** which unfolds along a scenic harbor of blue waters and picturesque boats. Glimpse Plymouth Rock and the reproduction ship the Pilgrims took on their journey to the New World, the **Mayflower II**. And view the Pilgrim way of life at **Plimoth Plantation**, a bi-cultural living history museum that includes a 17th century English Village, Colonial interpreters, a Native Wampanoag Homesite, Crafts Center and numerous Museum Shops.

Then head south to **Cape Cod** to soak up some coastal flavour at some of the oldest colonial settlements in North America. Explore **Falmouth**, whose essence is defined by the sea with 70 miles of winding coastline and nine public beaches, plus the 12-mile-long **Shining Sea Bikeway** that allows cyclists and walkers to meander close to the ocean and through salt marshes. falmouthchamber.com Or take a scenic drive to the **Cape Cod National Seashore**, 27,000 acres of protected shoreline that frames the elbow and outer arm of the Cape from Orleans to Provincetown. nps.gov/caco From here, you can rent a bike at one of many bicycle shops and pedal leisurely along the **Cape Cod Rail Trail**, which stretches 22 miles from **Dennis** to **Wellfleet**. mass.gov/dcr

At the tip of the Cape peninsula is gorgeous **Provincetown**, a vibrant and creative community and world-famous gay and lesbian resort town surrounded by the beauty of the ocean and an expanse of amazing and ever-changing dunescapes.

Visitors like climbing to the top of the **Pilgrim Monument** (pilgrim-monument.org), strolling **Commercial Street** and shopping and dining in its eclectic establishments, or taking advantage of an abundance of night-life. provincetowntourismoffice.org

From the Cape, head to the southern shore and catch a ferry to **Martha's Vineyard** from either **Hyannis** on the mid-Cape, **Falmouth** or **Woods Hole**. The hundred-square-mile island lies seven miles off Cape Cod, accessible by ferry or airplane. Visit **Vineyard Haven**, an artsy town where galleries and artists' studios dot Main Street or see the idyllic "gingerbread" cottages and beautiful harbour in **Oak Bluffs**. mvy.com

If you're looking to get away from the crowds, hop on a ferry at **Hyannis** or **Harwichport** to journey to **Nantucket**, thirty miles off the Massachusetts coast. With 50 square miles of incredible natural beauty and unspoiled historic charm, Nantucket offers a slower pace of life and ample time to bike or walk to explore the island's lighthouses, conservation land, and unspoiled beaches. For more than 150 years, Nantucket served as the centre of the world's whaling industry, a history you can see first-hand at the **Nantucket Whaling Museum**. nha.org Also in town, discover the **Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum**. nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org

After a few days on the coast, head west. From Cape Cod, if you dip south just a bit you'll come to the old fishing community of **New Bedford** on the South Coast, known for its rich architectural heritage, cobblestoned streets and **New Bedford Whaling Museum**. It's also the city that inspired Herman Melville to write Moby-Dick! As you continue west, stop at **Old Sturbridge Village** to get an authentic feel for early American life in the historically preserved settlement that features a re-created rural 1830s New England town set in a historical landscape and encompassing a Center Village, Mills Area, and Countryside. osv.org



Norman Rockwell Museum

Travel north along the western edge of the state to the lovely small towns of **Stockbridge** and **Lenox** in the **Berkshires**. Stockbridge is quintessential New England, the town where artist Norman Rockwell lived his last 25 years. Rich in history, Main Street in Stockbridge is sought after in summer, full of people meandering in and out of stores and cafés. About a mile away from town you'll find the **Norman Rockwell Museum**, which houses the world's largest and most significant collection of Rockwell's work, including 574 original paintings and drawings. The museum is dedicated to the enjoyment and study of his artwork as well as his contributions to society, popular culture, and social commentary. nrm.org Just north of Stockbridge is **Lenox**, recently described by LIFE Magazine as "Currier and Ives lovely." A century ago, many of America's wealthiest families were attracted to Lenox by its clear air and commanding vistas. They built magnificent summer mansions here, and called them "cottages." **Edith Wharton's The Mount**, built in 1902 and designed by the famous American author, is one such property. edithwharton.org

Enjoy the great outdoors of the Berkshires with a bike ride on a local rail trail or a hike up **Mount Greylock**, Massachusetts' highest peak. At 3,491 feet, Greylock rises above the surrounding Berkshire landscape, offering dramatic vistas with visibility of 60-90 miles. mass.gov/dcr/parks/western/mgry.htm **Bascom Lodge** at its summit is a rustic stone and wood lodge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s to provide accommodation for hikers, vacationers, and nature enthusiasts. The large dining room with its high ceiling and hand-cut oak beams serves lunch and dinner. An enclosed wraparound porch overlooks the finest views in the Berkshires. bascomlodge.net When you're ready to return eastward, drive along the **Mohawk Trail**, America's first scenic auto route built along a former Native American trail. mohawktrail.com

Last stop: the **North Shore**. On your way back to the coast, spend some time in **Lowell** at the **Lowell National Historical Park**, which chronicles the vital role the city played in the American Industrial Revolution; its water-powered textile mills were among the first in the USA. nps.gov/lowe From there, head to the tip of Cape Ann to visit **Rockport**, an artists' colony that centres around **Bear Skin Neck**, the home of 'Motif No.1,' the picturesque red fishing shack that has served as inspiration for artists the world over for more than a century. rockportusa.com Just a few miles away lies **Gloucester**, a city with a rich fishing and arts heritage all its own, and beautiful beaches. Start with a visit to the **Cape Ann Museum**, which exhibits the art, history, and culture of the region. capeannmuseum.org After the museum, head out on the open ocean on a **whale watching expedition!** Choose from among the many companies offering 3-4 hour tours that bring you close to the majestic marine giants. gloucesterma.com Finally, head further south to **Salem**. Start with the city's most notorious claim to fame – the **Witch Museum**, which chronicles the story of the infamous witch trials that gripped the city in 1692. salemwitchmuseum.com Next, explore the city's maritime history at the **Salem Maritime National Historic Site**, which offers family programs and tours of the historic replica of the tall ship **Friendship**. nps.gov/sama Finally, a must-see for literature buffs is the historic 17th-century **House of the Seven Gables**, made famous by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and open for tours and other events. 7gables.org For more info on Salem, visit salem.org



Bear Skin Neck in Rockport, with 'Motif. No. 1'